

BRIDGE OVER RIO GRANDE RIVER AT EL PASO, TEX.

JANUARY 15, 1897.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. SHERMAN, from the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9935.]

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom was referred House bill 9935, submit the following favorable report:

The bill authorizes the Sierra Madre Construction Company to construct a bridge over the Rio Grande River at El Paso, Tex. It makes provision for the company's obtaining consent of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, before the construction shall be commenced. The bill was submitted to the War Department, and under date of January 13, 1897, General Mackenzie, Acting Chief of Engineers, states:

Under the provisions of this bill any bridge that may be built is to have the same dimensions as those of the bridge authorized by an act of Congress, approved July 28, 1882. It is believed that these dimensions are adequate, so far as any navigation or commercial interests are concerned, and I see, therefore, no objection to the passage of the bill by Congress.

The bill not only authorizes the construction of a new bridge, but it authorizes the present company to acquire title to any bridge which may now exist at the above-mentioned point and to enlarge and strengthen the same in accordance with the provisions of the bill, so as to meet the requirements of the company.

The committee recommend that the bill be amended so as to strike out of line 12 of section 1 the words "at the option of the said corporation may" and insert in lieu thereof the word "shall;" to insert, after the word "sixteen," in line 5 of section 2, the words "of which to be fifteen feet in length;" to strike out all of section 4 of the bill and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SEC. 4. That all railroad companies desiring the use of said bridge shall have and be entitled to equal rights and privileges relative to the passage of railway trains over the same, and over the approaches thereto, upon payment of a reasonable compensation to the owners of said bridge, and should the several railroad companies, or any one of them desiring such use, fail to agree upon the sum or sums to be paid and upon rules and conditions to which each shall conform in using said bridge, all matters at issue between them shall be decided by the Secretary of War upon a hearing of the allegations and proofs of the parties; and all telephone and telegraph companies shall have equal rights and privileges in constructing and operating their lines across said bridge.

As thus amended, the committee report the bill to the House with the recommendation that it do pass.

